

Message Text

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15
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

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INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
USNMR SHAPE
CINC USNAVEUR LONDON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01148

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, GW, MPOL
SUBJECT: FAVORABLE PROSPECTS FOR NATO FRIGATE FUNDING

1. SENIOR GERMAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAVE INDICATED THAT THE PROSPECTS ARE HIGHLY FAVORABLE THAT THE BUNDESTAG WILL APPROVE FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AT LEAST SIX F-122 CLASS NATO FRIGATES. THE BUNDESTAG DEFENSE COMMITTEE MET ON JANUARY 21 TO CONSIDER THE FUNDING REQUEST, WITH THE HEARINGS LABELLED A SUCCESS BY OUR SOURCES. THE COMMITTEE IS NOT EXPECTED TO GRANT FINAL APPROVAL UNTIL JAN 28 .

2. THE FRIGATE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM HAS BEEN OPPOSED BY LEFT-WING SPD MEMBERS WHO ARGUED THAT (A) THE FRG NAVY HAD NO MISSION FOR SUCH SHIPS AND (B) THEY COST TOO MUCH. THESE PARLIAMENTARIANS ARGUED FURTHER THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR THE FRG TO PURCHASE FIVE
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BOEING HYDROFOILS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE FRIGATE.

3. COMMENT: FINAL APPROVAL OF THE FRIGATE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WILL BE ENTHUSIASTICALLY GREETED BY GERMAN NAVAL OFFICERS. ONE SENIOR OFFICER TOLD US IT DID NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE HOW MANY SHIPS WERE INITIALLY AUTHORIZED, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO START THE PROGRAM. NEW REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FRIGATES COULD ALWAYS BE SUBMITTED LATER. DELIVERY OF THE FRIGATES TO THE FLEET IN THE 1980'S WILL ENABLE THE GERMAN NAVY TO EXPAND ITS MISSION IN THE NORTH SEA, SOMETHING WHICH THE GERMANS HAVE BEEN CONSTRAINED FROM DOING FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND EQUIPMENT REASONS. END COMMENT.
HILLENBRAND

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